

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended) A production process for an alkylene oxide addition product, which comprises the step of carrying out an addition reaction of an alkylene oxide to a hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound in order to obtain the alkylene oxide addition product;

with the production process ~~being characterized by~~ further comprising: ~~[[the]]~~ an initial step of causing the alkylene oxide to add by an addition reaction to the hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound in an amount of not larger than 20 mols on average of the alkylene oxide per 1 mol of the hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound to thereby obtain an alkylene oxide low-mol-addition product; and ~~[[the]]~~ a molar-degree-of-polyaddition-adjusting step of causing the alkylene oxide to further add by an addition reaction to the alkylene oxide low-mol-addition product as obtained in the initial step; wherein a portion of the entirety of the alkylene oxide low-mol-addition product as obtained in the initial step is used in the molar-degree-of-polyaddition-adjusting step.

2. (Original) A production process for an alkylene oxide addition product according to claim 1, wherein the hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound has a water content of not more than 6,000 ppm.

3. (Currently amended) A production process for an alkylene oxide addition product according to claim 1 ~~[[or 2]]~~, wherein the hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound is a saturated monohydric alcohol or monohydric phenol having 1 to 30 carbon atoms.

4. (Currently amended) A production process for a (meth)acrylate ester, which comprises the step of carrying out an esterification reaction between (meth)acrylic acid and

an alkylene oxide addition product from a hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound or a transesterification reaction between the alkylene oxide addition product and an alkyl ester of (meth)acrylic acid, thereby obtaining the (meth)acrylate ester;

~~with the production process being characterized in that~~ wherein the alkylene oxide addition product from the hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound is a product obtained by a process including: ~~[[the]]~~ an initial step of causing the alkylene oxide to add by an addition reaction to the hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound in an amount of not larger than 20 mols on average of the alkylene oxide per 1 mol of the hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound to thereby obtain an alkylene oxide low-mol-addition product; and ~~[[the]]~~ a molar-degree-of-polyaddition-adjusting step of causing the alkylene oxide to further add by an addition reaction to the alkylene oxide low-mol-addition product as obtained in the initial step; wherein a portion of the entirety of the alkylene oxide low-mol-addition product as obtained in the initial step is used in the molar-degree-of-polyaddition-adjusting step.

5. (Original) A production process for a (meth)acrylate ester according to claim 4, wherein the hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound has a water content of not more than 6,000 ppm.

6. (Currently amended) A production process for a (meth)acrylate ester according to claim 4 ~~[[or 5]]~~, wherein the hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound is a saturated monohydric alcohol or monohydric phenol having 1 to 30 carbon atoms.

7. (Currently amended) A production process for a (meth)acrylic copolymer, which comprises the step of carrying out a polymerization reaction of a monomer component including a (meth)acrylate ester to thereby obtain the (meth)acrylic copolymer;

~~with the production process being characterized in that~~ wherein:

the (meth)acrylate ester is a product obtained by a process including the step of carrying out an esterification reaction between (meth)acrylic acid and an alkylene oxide addition product from a hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound or a transesterification reaction between the alkylene oxide addition product and an alkyl ester of (meth)acrylic acid;

wherein the alkylene oxide addition product from the hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound is a product obtained by a process including: ~~[[the]]~~ an initial step of causing the alkylene oxide to add by an addition reaction to the hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound in an amount of not larger than 20 mols on average of the alkylene oxide per 1 mol of the hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound to thereby obtain an alkylene oxide low-mol-addition product; and ~~[[the]]~~ a molar-degree-of-polyaddition-adjusting step of causing the alkylene oxide to further add by an addition reaction to the alkylene oxide low-mol-addition product as obtained in the initial step; wherein a portion of the entirety of the alkylene oxide low-mol-addition product as obtained in the initial step is used in the molar-degree-of-polyaddition-adjusting step.

8. (Original) A production process for a (meth)acrylic copolymer according to claim 7, wherein the hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound has a water content of not more than 6,000 ppm.

9. (Currently amended) A production process for a (meth)acrylic copolymer according to claim 7 [[or 8]], wherein the hydroxyl-group-containing saturated compound is a saturated monohydric alcohol or monohydric phenol having 1 to 30 carbon atoms.